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POLICY ISSUES: COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Overview of UNEP's GEF-funded activities

Note by the Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

1. At the request of the Drafting Group of the Committee of Permanent Representatives meeting, held on 5 December 1996, this document, containing an overview of UNEP's GEF-funded activities is submitted as an information note to the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of UNEP, as a supplement to the report of the Executive Director on the participation of UNEP in the work of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (UNEP/GC.19/16).

I. PROJECTS

A. Biodiversity

1. Support for the preparation of biodiversity country studies (costs, benefits and unmet needs of biodiversity conservation): phase 1:-Bahamas, Egypt, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Thailand (US$ 5 million), phase 2:-Burkina Faso, China, Colombia, Cuba, Estonia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zaire (US$ 2 million)

2. This project is designed to gather information on the status and trends of a country's species, genetic materials, habitats and ecosystems; the status of current practices for the conservation and use of biological

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diversity: and the monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits involved. It is an overview of the opportunities and problems that the country faces in protecting and mobilizing its biotic wealth. As such, the project is aimed at providing essential background information for the sound formulation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Through this process, the project also enhances the capacity of developing countries in respect of biodiversity assessment and project planning.

2. Biodiversity data management and networking biodiversity information (Bahamas, China, Chile, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Thailand) (US$ 4 million)

3. The overall objective of this BDM project, which is based on the outputs of the biodiversity country studies project, is to enhance the capacity of developing countries in data management to support the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The project has selected countries to participate in the following activities: conducting a national institutional survey to report on the existing national capacity for data management; preparing a national plan for the management and application of biodiversity data in support of the Convention; developing a series of basic guidelines to support efficient information management; and compiling a resource inventory of available methods and technologies which can be drawn upon to assist data management.

3. Global Biodiversity Assessment (US$ 3 million)

4. The aim of this project is to provide an independent, critical, peer-reviewed scientific analysis of the current issues, theories and views regarding the origins, dynamics, assessment, measurement, monitoring, economic valuation, conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity to identify critical scientific issues and to draw attention to areas where there is consensus or continuing debate among scientists.

5. The global biodiversity assessment and the summary for policy-makers were released in November 1995 at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

6. A supplement to the main assessment, on human values of biodiversity, focusing on the traditional, religious and cultural values of biodiversity, was presented in November 1996 to the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological diversity.

B. Climate change

1. Country case-studies on sources and sinks of greenhouse cases (Costa Rica, Gambia, Mexico, Morocco, Poland, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Venezuela) (US$ 4.7 million)

7. The purpose of this project is to develop and refine the methodology for preparing national inventories of sources and sinks of greenhouse gases (GHG) and to enable the countries Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to complete their national GHG inventories using the approved guidelines.

2. Capacity-building and infrastructure: participation in the assessment, methodology development and other activities of the intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (US$ 2.8 million)

8. The purpose of this project is to enhance the contribution of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to IPCC activities designed to provide scientific and technical assessments in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to strengthen their countries' capacities in terms of research, systematic observation and detection of climate change and its impact and the development of response strategies.

3. Country studies on climate change impacts and adaptation assessments (Antigua and Barbuda, Cameroon, Estonia, Pakistan) (Phase 1: US$ 2 million)

9. The purpose of this project is to provide adequate methodologies for countries to assess the impact of climate change, especially in vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, forestry and the marine environment, and to elaborate integrated policies and plans for adaptation responses to climate change.

4. Economics of greenhouse gas limitations - Phase 1: establishment of a methodological framework for climate-change mitigation assessment (Argentina, Ecuador, Estonia, Hungary, Indonesia, Mauritius, Senegal, Vietnam, SADC and Andean regions) (US$ 3 million)

10. The purpose of this project is to complete integrated assessments of mitigation strategies and their costs in selected countries, leading to the establishment of a common methodology for calculating the costs of climate-change mitigation.

C. International waters

1. Strategic action programme for the binational basin of the Bermejo river (Argentina and Bolivia) (US$ 2.99 million)

11. The purpose of this project is to develop a strategic action programme that will promote environmentally sustainable development for the binational basin of the Bermejo river, with a view to reversing the environmental degradation of land and water resources which is occurring.

12. More specifically, the objectives of the project are to:

(a) Carry out an environmental diagnostic survey of the basin to identify priority transboundary environmental concerns;

(b) Formulate a strategic action programme for the binational basin aimed at solving priority transboundary environmental concerns;

(c) Assist the Governments of Argentina and Bolivia to incorporate transboundary environmental concerns, including biodiversity and the prevention of land degradation, into their development policies, plans and programmes for the basin; and

(d) Conduct demonstration activities during the process of formulating the strategic action plan to gain information needed for management purposes.

2. Assisting the other Implementing Agencies in the implementation of projects related to international waters

13. UNEP is also assisting the World Bank and UNDP in the implementation of the following GEF projects: the Lake Victoria Environmental Programme; developing the Danube River Basin Pollution Programme and developing the implementation of the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FACILITY (PDF)

A. Biodiversity

1. Assessment of and support to the management of marine and coastal biodiversity of the East Asian seas (PDF A, US$ 25,000)

14. The PDF A was allocated to fund the costs associated with the holding of a workshop of government-designated experts to discuss the outline of a project proposal for a programme to support the assessment and management of marine and coastal biodiversity in the East Asian Seas.

2. Protection of the wild camel (Camelus bactrianus ferus) in the Gobi Desert (PDF A, US$ 25,000)

15. The PDF A was used to fund the costs of conducting a field survey to identify the status of the wild camel in the Gobi Desert and formulate a project proposal on the establishment of a nature sanctuary for the protection of this highly threatened endemic species.

3. Species 2000 programme for indexing the world's known species (PDF A, US$ 25,000)

16. Species 2000 is a programme aimed at listing and indexing all the species of organisms known to science in a manner that will make access to this index easy for all countries. The PDF A grant was used to support a three-day inaugural workshop to agree on the project plan, constitute a Species 2000 Federation, bringing together all major taxonomic database custodians, and design a common access system.

4. Supporting the implementation of Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity to preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (PDF B, US$ 345,000)

17. The purpose of the proposal is to organize three regional workshops in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean with representatives of indigenous and local communities to present the GEF and enable participants to prepare project proposals for supporting the implementation of Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

B. Climate change

1. Assisting the Russian Federation to develop national legislation for the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (PDF A, US$ 25,000)

18. The purpose of the proposal is to assist the Russian Federation to review its sectoral legislation, with a view to facilitating the preparation of a GEF project proposal which will focus on strengthening the national capacity in the legal and institutional fields, so as to assist the country in reviewing its existing national legislation for the effective implementation of the commitments of the Russian Federation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

C. International waters

1. Proposal "Formulation of a strategic action programme for the Mediterranean Sea to address pollution from land-based activities" (PDF B, US$ 340,000)

19. The primary purpose of this PDF is the formulation of a costed and targeted strategic action programme of projects and activities for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against degradation from land-based activities. The strategic action programme will encompass a broad framework and timetable for the implementation of mechanisms and measures that will lead to the protection of the marine environment, including its biological resources and diversity, from harmful land-based activities. This framework will include a basis on which to develop an investment portfolio to address the most acute environmental problems resulting from land-based activities.

20. More specifically, this strategic action programme will involve:

(a) Identification and assessment of problems and causes including pollution hot spots, leading to the development of a comprehensive transboundary diagnostic analysis;

(b) Establishment of priorities for action;

(c) Formulation of principles, approaches, measures and a timetable for implementation of the components of the programme; and

(d) Preparation of a priority list for intervention and investments.

2. Global international waters assessment (PDF B, US$ 350,000)

21. The overall purpose of this PDF is to prepare a project on a comprehensive and integrated global international waters assessment. The outcome of the project will provide an overarching structure and framework for deciding on those issues and problems, and those regions that would receive priority in the GEF international waters portfolio. More specifically, the assessment will involve the preparation of:

(a) Up-to-date related global reviews of selected issues and problems of relevance to the GEF international waters portfolio;

(b) Regionally based reviews of global issues and problems relating to the aquatic environment, including inter alia the significance of land-based activities; and,

(c) A global overview of interregional transboundary issues in the area of international waters.

3. Preparation of a transboundary diagnostic analysis and framework of a strategic action programme for the marine and coastal environment of the western Indian Ocean (PDF B, US$ 285,000)

22. The overall purpose of this PDF is to prepare a transboundary diagnostic analysis and the elements of a framework for a strategic action programme that will build upon and complement the institutional and programmatic framework put in place by the Nairobi Convention and Action Plan. The project will establish a process, the long-term objective of which is to secure global environmental benefits by identifying and implementing a sustainable management programme for the shared environment and resources of the region.

23. The strategic action plan derived from this PDF will seek to:

(a) Link and integrate the existing programmes and projects in the western Indian Ocean;

(b) Identify priority issues, gaps, overlaps and areas that need to be addressed in an holistic manner; and

(c) Identify appropriate demonstration activities that could be implemented in the short term.

4. Formulation of a transboundary diagnostic analysis and preliminary framework of a strategic action programme for the South China Sea (PDF B, US$ 335,000)

24. The primary purpose of this PDF initiative is to undertake an extensive transboundary diagnostic analysis for the South China Sea and the watersheds draining into it. The transboundary diagnostic analysis will form the basis for formulating a framework strategic action programme that will itemize

short and medium-term priorities for action. The project will be designed to implement short-term actions identified as a priority by the strategic action programme and further elaborate the framework developed under this PDF activity. Short-term actions envisaged include inter alia pre-investment feasibility studies, priority interventions in sustainable management of biodiversity and pilot demonstration projects.

25. More specifically the transboundary diagnostic analysis will identify appropriate interventions concerned with inter alia:

(a) Biological diversity management through the identification of subregional centres of diversity of regional and global importance;

(b) Joint management of fisheries through identification of fisheries-related problems involving over-harvesting of transboundary stocks, and degradation and loss of regionally important nursery and feeding areas;

(c) Assessment of contamination problems and causes including "pollution hot spots" and the identification of possible remedial action;

(d) The development of a priority investment portfolio, that would form the subject of pre-investment studies during the execution of the resultant GEF project;

(e) Projections of future environmental conditions resulting from continued economic growth and development; and

(f) Actions required at the national level to address the underlying causes of the problems and issues identified.

5. Assistance to other Implementing Agencies

26. UNEP is also assisting the other Implementing Agencies in the implementation and preparation of the following PDF proposals related to international waters:

(a) Strategic action programme for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region;

(b) Strategic action plan in the Danube River Basin;

(c) The Caspian Sea;

(d) The Mekong River; and

(e) The Nile initiative.

D. Ozone-layer depletion

1. Implementation of the Montreal Protocol

27. UNEP is engaged in partnership with UNDP in the formulation of country programmes and the preparation of technical assistance investment projects to help the following countries implement the Montreal Protocol:

(a) Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Cyprus (PDF B, UNDP: US$ 203,500; UNEP: US$ 145,000);

(b) Latvia and Lithuania (PDF B, UNDP: US$ 182,000; UNEP: US$ 49,500);

(c) Azerbaijan and Georgia (PDF B, US$ 235,000).

28. The global environmental objective of all these PDF B initiatives is to eliminate rapidly the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances in the countries concerned. This will have the global environmental benefit of eliminating approximately 510 metric tonnes of ozone-depleting substances annually (1994 estimated figures).

29. More specifically, these initiatives have the following objectives:

(a) To ensure these countries' ability to meet the data requirements of the Montreal Protocol;

(b) To prepare country programmes to assist these countries to make the transition to non-ODS technology, as required by the Montreal Protocol, through support for priority subprojects, identified in the country programmes;

(e) To identify sectoral technical-assistance needs in these countries so as to enable the ODS phase-out process to commence and be sustained; and

(f) To identify and develop detailed sectoral ODS phase-out investment-project proposals in the five sectors, for subsequent funding and implementation by the World Bank as the appropriate GEF Implementing Agency.

30. There is a further PDF activity of UNEP to enable countries with economies in transition to phase out ODS in compliance with the Montreal Protocol (PDF B, US$ 89,875).

E. Land degradation/biodiversity

People, land use and environmental change (PLEC) (US$ 100,000)

31. PLEC is aimed at designing a central criterion and methodology approach to link the conservation of biological diversity and small-farmer livelihood strategies through replicable land-management strategies that have global value. The PDF B grant was used to consolidate phase one of the project, which focused on developing methodologies and preliminary assessments in five regional clusters.

32. The PLEC Project (US$ 6.1 million) has been cleared technically and will be submitted for adoption to the GEF Council.

F. Cross-cutting issues

1. Global environmental citizenship (PDF B, US$ 235,000)

33. The immediate objective of this PDF is to create a global environmental citizenship, whose members will understand their relationship and responsibilities in respect of global environmental goals, as prioritized by the international community, and participate in actions that will make it possible to attain these goals. The proposal will focus on Latin America and the Caribbean as the first region in which the global environmental citizenship will address the four focal areas of GEF.

34. The long-term objective is to ensure that action is taken by key groups on a continuing basis at the local, national and regional levels in support of the implementation activities related to the four focal areas of GEF.

35. This proposal would provide an opportunity to exchange experience and best practices on climate change, biodiversity, international waters and ozone-layer depletion among key constituencies in the region.

2. Project Development Workshop on GEF (PDF C, US$ 560,000)

36. UNEP is participating with UNDP and the World Bank, in the implementation of the Project Development Workshop on GEF. The objective of the project is to enhance the capacity of an ever-widening range of GEF stakeholders in participating countries to identify, develop, and manage well-designed, high-quality, country-driven GEF-eligible projects which produce maximum global benefits consistent with the GEF Operational Strategy and Programmes.

37. The project will produce the following outcomes which will enhance GEF's ability to bring about environmental benefits:

(a) It will build within GEF-eligible countries a working understanding among key actors in sustainable development of central GEF concepts, objectives and strategies;

(b) It will ensure the development of well-designed and formulated country-driven projects consistent with eligibility criteria; and

(c) It will build broader and more coherent GEF teams based on stronger linkages and working partnerships between in-country stakeholders, GEF operational focal points, the Implementing Agencies, the GEF secretariat and the relevant international environmental conventions.